

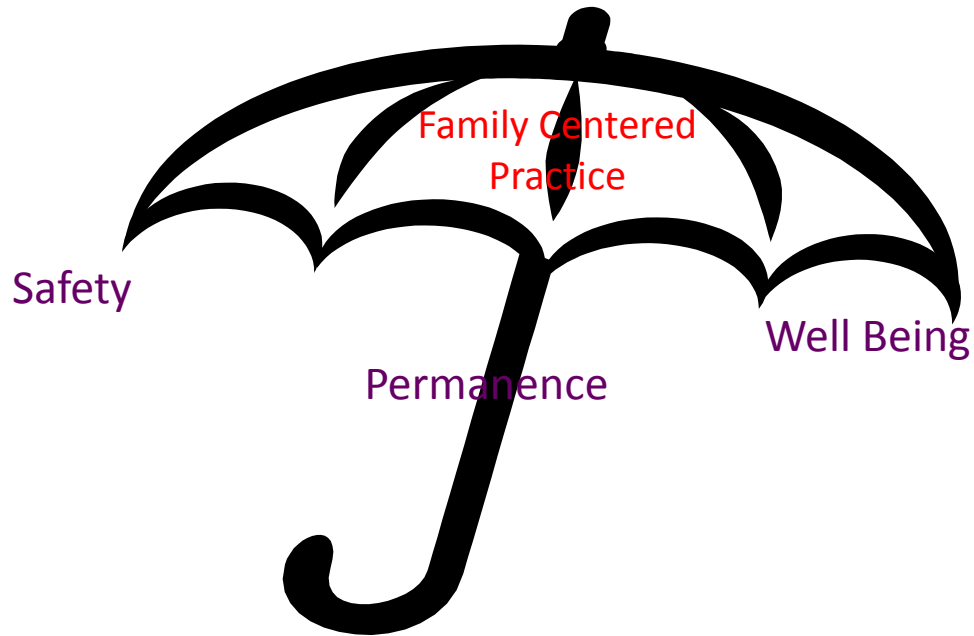
Wyoming Children's Justice Project



Blog Talk Radio Concurrent Planning: Social Work Perspectives



Nov. 10, 2011



Family Engagement

Clinical Supervision

Family Partnership Meetings

Community Partnerships

Legal Collaboration

Diligent Search

Targeted Recruitment

Staff/FP Retention

Visitation

Concurrent Planning

Birth/Foster Parent
Relationships

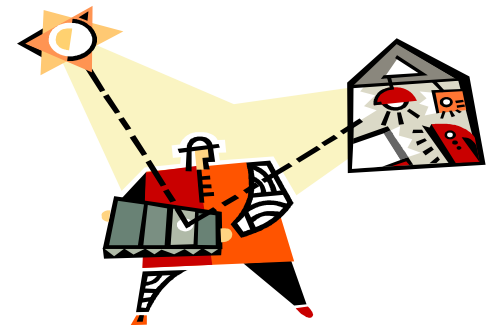
Concurrent Planning Definitions

- Working towards reunification while at the same time, establishing and **implementing** an alternative permanency plan.
- Concurrent rather than sequential planning efforts to more quickly move children/youth from the uncertainty of out of home placement to the security of a permanent family.



Wyoming Defines Concurrent Planning as:

- The term used to describe an alternative to reunification of a child/youth with their original family. Alternative (concurrent) planning for a child/youth should be done simultaneously with reunification planning and should begin at the time the child/youth is initially removed from his/her family.

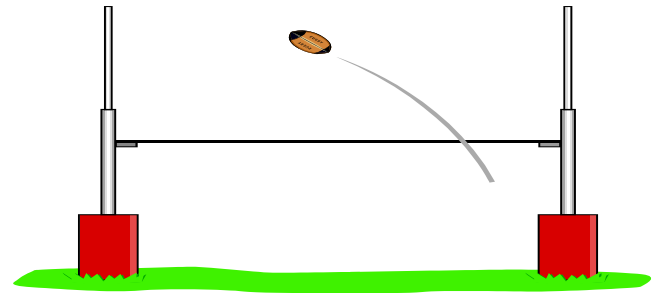


Goals of Concurrent Planning



- To support the safety and well-being of children/youth and their families
- To promote early permanency decisions
- To decrease length of time in out of home care
- To reduce the number of moves and relationship disruptions children/youth experience

Concurrent Planning Goals (con't)



- To develop a network of placement resources (relatives and non-relatives) who can work towards reunification and also serve as permanency resources.
- To engage families/kin in early case planning, case review and decision making about permanency options to meet children/youth's urgent need for stability and continuity in their family relationships.
- To maintain continuity in children/youth's family, sibling and community relationships.

Concurrent Planning



- Kinship placements have shown us that people can care for and make life-long commitments to children/youth, while at the same time, encouraging and supporting reunification.
- It is the intent of concurrent planning to use these resources when available and to develop these kinds of relationships with community based foster parents for birth families who do not have appropriate kin networks of their own.

Why Concurrent Planning?



- Children/Youth in the child welfare/probation system are most damaged by numerous moves, which exacerbate the grief and loss they experience due to their initial separation.
- They are further damaged by the uncertainty and inability to plan and have hope for their future.
- Pre-verbal children are unable to attach to multiple caretakers and become unable to have successful relationships later on.

Why Concurrent Permanency Planning?

Youth who “age out” of the system without permanent homes are at great risk of being involved with the adult corrections system, having low educational achievement, becoming pregnant, and/or becoming homeless.





Riding the Emotional Roller Coaster

- Implies that mentally healthy adults are better able to deal with the uncertainty of attaching to someone they may have to “give up.”
- While this seems like a hard sell, it is what we have been asking children/youth to do repeatedly as they have walked through the maze of foster care.

Permanency Planning vs. Concurrent Permanency Planning

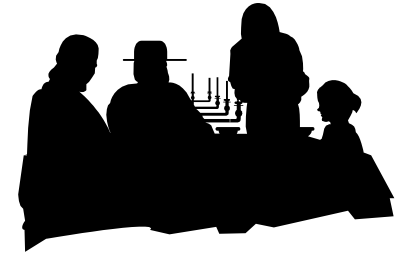
Permanency Planning

- Necessary for all children and youth regardless of permanency goal & prognosis
- Is an ongoing process through out the life of the case
- Requires numerous types of placement options and life long connections

Concurrent Planning

- Designed as a specific type of Permanency Planning for children/youth with a primary permanency goal of reunification
- Is determined within the first 60-90 days of the child/youth's placement
- Requires specific types of relative and non-relative placement options

Family Partnerships



- There are numerous reasons why birth parents may be resistant to cooperate with locating all of the child/youth's relatives, including; anger and fear over the placement, not wanting the relatives to know due to embarrassment, resentment towards the other parent, and fear that the youth will be lost to them.
- Few of these reasons truly put the child/youth's needs first and full disclosure requires we explain this to the family.

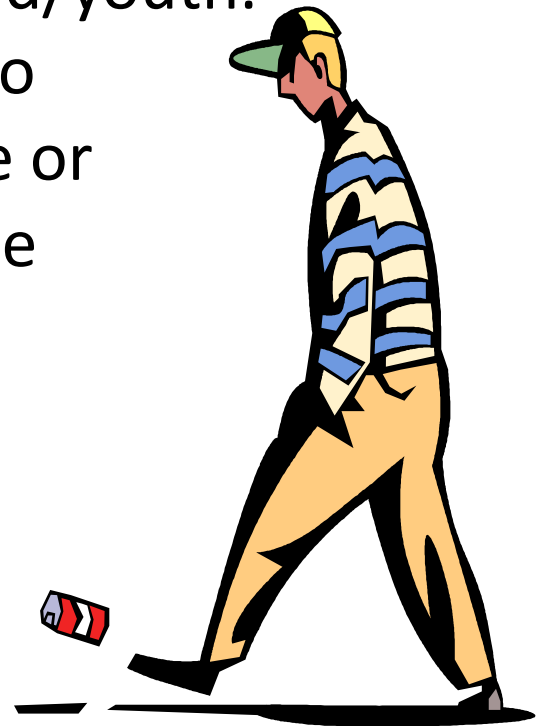
Diligent Search for & Engagement of Fathers & Kin

- Request an Accurant search
- Request a FPLS search
- Don't take mom's word for it
- Unfortunately the child welfare roles have an overrepresentation of folks with personality disorders who express anger, fear and rejection by cutting off relationships. The mother who claims the youth's father is a "dead beat" may or may not be telling the truth. We need to find the uninvolved fathers and their relatives so that we may **assess the current situation & reasons for lack of involvement.**



Diligent Search for & Engagement of Fathers & Kin

- **Talk to children/youth about important people in their lives;** ask them where they spent holidays or celebrations, trips they may have taken, etc. Ask about cell phone “favs,” facebook “friends,” etc.
- People Remembered Chart and Important People in the Child’s Life forms can be done with the child/youth.
- **Identify fictive kin as well as relatives;** who babysat for them, anybody they call auntie or Godmother, people their parents have gone to when they needed help.
- **Ask known kin about other kin.**
- Do an immediate **ICWA** determination.
- Use **paternity testing** when necessary.





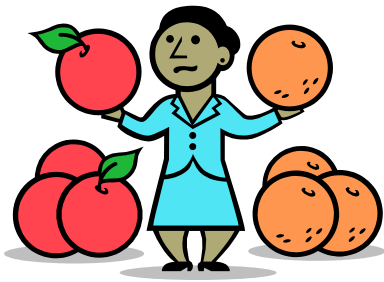
- Seeking out the youth's family can be useful not only for placement resource purposes, but can also be a valuable source of information, support for the family as well as a life long connection for the child/youth.
- Family Search and Engagement is not just about finding family.
- Helping the family work together to determine the best placement option also reduces the work load of having to do numerous home studies and helps to ensure the stability of the placement.

Assessment of all possible concurrent planning options.

This is a critical supervisory juncture

Develop the permanency plan and the concurrent plan with all parties (i.e., parents, relatives, youth, out of home providers, attorneys) based on available familial resources and the youth's permanency needs.





Assessment of all possible concurrent planning options

- The parents should be asked to determine who it is they would like to see raise the youth if they are unable to, however, DFS in collaboration with the legal system, is ultimately responsible for determining if the parents' choice is in the child/youth's best interest & meets their needs for safety, permanency and well being.
- If applicable, a placement that allows siblings to be placed together should always be a priority.

Placement with the non-custodial parent

- Determine if there is a noncustodial parent, a relative or kin that can become the concurrent planning resource family.
- If the noncustodial parent is determined to be a placement resource, a decision regarding the continuation of reunification services to the parent the child/youth was removed from must be made.
- In some cases the placement with the non-custodial parent will be the permanent plan, in other cases it will be the concurrent plan.





- If there are no appropriate and willing kinship resources, identify a concurrent planning resource family from the pool of recruited and trained families within your county, and then look statewide.
- Develop a transition plan, with the youth, to move the child/youth to the concurrent planning resource home. Pre-placement visits should be a vital part of this plan.

Hierarchy of Permanency Goals in Out of Home Cases

- Reunification with same parent or non-custodial parent
- Adoption
- Guardianship
- Permanent placement with a relative
- Other planned permanent living arrangement



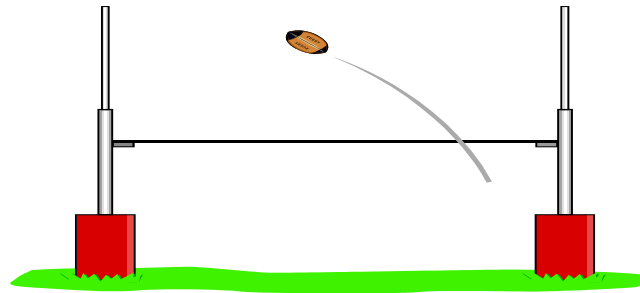
Other Planned Permanent Living Arrangement



- OPPLA or APPLA, should only be used when all other permanency options for the child/youth have been exhausted. It should never be the concurrent plan.
- It must include a plan that provides the child/youth with a stable permanent living situation as well as an array of life long connections with relatives and other significant adults.

Hierarchy of Concurrent Permanency Goals

- Adoption
- Guardianship with a relative or non-relative
- Permanent placement with a relative



Implementing the Plan: With some exceptions, child/youth is placed in the alternative home while reunification efforts continue

Exceptions may include:

- A relative who lives too far away for parents to visit. Relationship development/continuation is necessary.
- After a relative search and review of certified homes, no appropriate resource exists and child/youth specific recruitment continues.

Implementing the plan for youth in treatment/corrections facilities

- Regular visitation and other forms of contact with the potential placement resource
- Involvement of both families, along with the youth, in discharge planning
- Also include regular contact with significant relatives/kin and people interested in maintaining a life long connection with the youth.

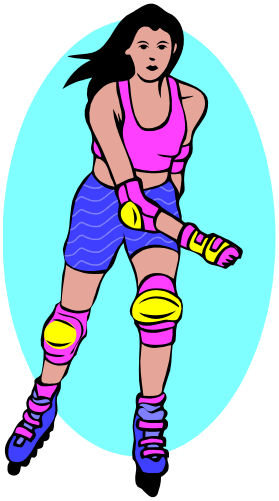


The Compatibility of Concurrent Planning and ICWA



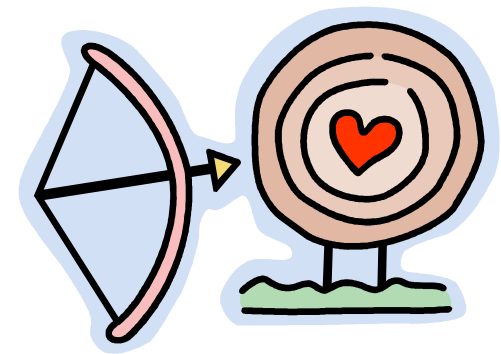
- A family centered approach which respects and engages extended family including “fictive kin.”
- Recognizes the child/youth’s need to maintain connections with family, culture, community.
- Seeks placement with relatives who can provide permanency before using unrelated resources.

Concurrent Planning Can Have Positive Effect on Disproportionality issues



- Increased involvement of families in decision making, including extended families, by broadening the search and engagement of relatives, both maternal and paternal.
- Building community supports and partnerships to increase family support services which keep children/youth at home.
- Targeted recruitment based on type and location of children/youth in care.
- A Family Centered Practice approach which confronts biases and acknowledges power and authority dynamics.

What about the youth already past concurrent planning timelines?



- Youth centered discussions and case mining
- Original diligent search thorough enough?
- Where are the siblings?
- Life Books/Relationship Webs
- Look at people who were ruled out in the past such as relatives who have changed over time
- Permanency Roundtables/Permanency Pacts
- Wendy's Wonderful Kids program

Con't

- OPPLA/APPLA youth should be reconsidered for reunification.
- This includes youth whose parents' rights were previously terminated.
- Eight states have laws allowing reinstatement of parental rights. In other states parents are adopting their own youth.
- Consider this for children who were removed years before from parents who have now grown up, straightened up and stabilized their lives.





References and Resources

- The WY DFS website gives you access to the WY Concurrent Planning Handbook, Brochure and Tool
<http://dfsweb.state.wy.us/about-us/publications.html>
- Implementing Concurrent Planning: A Handbook for Child Welfare Administrators, from the NRC for Organizational Improvement by Patricia Schene, Ph.D. Edited by Barbara Sparks May, 2001
<http://muskie.usm.maine.edu/helpkids/rcpdfs/concurrent.pdf>

References and Resources

- Tool # 1: Concurrent Permanency Planning By Alice Boles Ott, Outlines fairly simply the intent, origination and importance of concurrent planning and how to “get started.”
<http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/socwork/nrcfcpp/downloads/tools/cpp-tool.pdf>
- Concurrent Planning Checklist for Counties Page 10
Concurrent Planning—Existing Challenges and New Possibilities *By Susan Brooks, Director, Northern California Training Academy, Center for Human Services, UC Davis Extension Spring/Summer 2009*
http://humanservices.ucdavis.edu/news/pdf/091_252_ro.pdf

References and Resources

CWLA Press, Toolboxes For Permanency Series, Toolbox # 2, **Expanding the Role of Foster Parents in Achieving Permanency**, by Susan Dougherty (2001) www.cwla.org

The National Resource Center for Family Centered Practice & Permanency Planning, **Preventing the Triangulation of the Triangle of Support**, by Lorrie Lutz, MPP
[http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/socwork/nrcfcpp/downloads/triangle of support.pdf](http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/socwork/nrcfcpp/downloads/triangle%20of%20support.pdf)

References and Resources

- Love and Belonging for a Lifetime: Youth Permanency in Child Welfare. American Humane Association, Protecting Children Volume 26, Number 1, 2011
<http://www.americanhumane.org/assets/pdfs/children/protecting-children-journal/pc-26-1.pdf>
- **Permanency Pact**
Foster Club's free tool designed to encourage life-long, kin-like connections between a young person and a supportive adult.
<http://transition.fosterclub.com/article/permanency-pact>

References and Resources

- Resources from other sources and states can be found on the NRCPFC web-site,
http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/socwork/nrcpfc/info_services/concurrent-permanency-planning.html
- Resources regarding permanency for adolescents can be found at:
http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/socwork/nrcfcpp/info_services/youth-permanency.html